

OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

Sp - Relocation

6 January 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

FROM:

[redacted]
Acting Chief, Operations Group

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SUBJECT: Management Trip Report--13-19 December 1985 (except)

Gulf Bureau--13-15 December

[redacted] has settled in rather nicely in Manama and is building on the good relations established within the Mission by his predecessor. He is pleased with the bureau staff and raised no major problems with me. He is expecting, and hoping, that Persian monitor [redacted] will retire and is confident that he can keep him on the retirement track. Phil is excited over the possibility of hiring ex-Amman Bureau monitor [redacted] whom he feels is capable enough to even do some associate editor work. I encouraged him to follow up with [redacted] and took that word along with me to Jordan, where [redacted] will help Phil with the necessary administrative work. [redacted] will be available in the spring. Phil has also extended a firm job offer to a [redacted] for an Arabic monitor position.

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The principal issue of concern to Phil is whether to move from the current bureau site [redacted]. The issue is one of security as well as one of opportunity, in that a new chancery is planned to be constructed this coming summer.

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[redacted] Ambassador Donald Leidel, with whom Phil and I met for an hour on the 14th, has mixed feelings. He definitely wants all Mission components within a single secure perimeter, but won't allow the construction of the chancery to be delayed any further. Therefore, he will not agree to the redesign of a chancery to include any component that was not in the original planning--which means FBIS. As he put it, the main plot of ground for the new building has been purchased from the Bahrainis, but the deed has not yet been transferred. He wants FBIS in the Embassy complex but he expects us to fund the purchase of a second, adjoining parcel of ground and then build our own building. The ambassador has approached the Bahraini Foreign Ministry on the second parcel of land, but the Foreign Ministry is not ready at this time to negotiate any additional purchase. In their minds, the profile of the U.S. Embassy is already too high and additional land would only exacerbate the perceived problem. No price

has been mentioned by the Foreign Ministry for the parcel, but people at the Embassy feel it could go as high as \$2 million. According to the Ambassador, all the Bahrainis have promised him is the right of first refusal.

I feel that the only real option we have is to make every possible effort here in Washington to obtain some of the Congressional funds designed to build secure U.S. installations abroad. C/AS should see what can or need be done with the DDA, FBO, or whomever to see if FBIS can get this kind of funding relief. [redacted] is certain that he can get the Ambassador to weigh in on our behalf if we make any progress at all on the funding issue.

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Clearly, [redacted] is not the long-range answer to our problem. In the 2 1/2 years since my last visit to the bureau, the building has deteriorated badly, with stucco falling off the exterior walls and half the apartments now vacant. Phil says the owner is putting no money into the building and, consequently, no one is moving into the vacant apartments. [redacted]

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[redacted] I told Phil to actively continue his search for an alternate location and promised him we'll keep him informed of our efforts to get funding relief. If no funding relief is in sight and no real relocation alternative is found, we might have to reconsider our presence in Bahrain. Conservative estimates for buying an adequate plot of land and building our own building approach the \$3 million mark!

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Some operational issues: Phil says the coordination with BBC on Saudi Arabian coverage has gone "reasonably well." The bureau is happy with the arrangement. The bureau hopes to refurbish its roof-top antenna array this winter and will report to MOD and ESG when completed. I told Phil to arrange with [redacted] in Islamabad for an orientation TDY to Gulf in the March-June period.

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